

ish forces operating from Portsmouth and Devonport, England, in conducting antisubmarine patrols.

*Aylwin* remained in European waters following the end of the war. On 26 December 1918, she sailed in company with *Chester* (Cruiser No. 1) for an inspection tour of the Baltic ports of Germany. The ships, which, were operating under the auspices of the Allied Naval Armistice Commission, were to remove any American prisoners of war or citizens discovered in the German ports. On 16 June 1919, *Aylwin* departed Brest, France, bound for the United States, and arrived at New York City 10 days later. She then proceeded to the Philadelphia Navy Yard where she was placed in reserve.

While in this status, *Aylwin* received the designation DD-47 on 17 July 1920. She was decommissioned on 23 February 1921. The ship's name was cancelled on 1 July 1933 so that a new destroyer, DD-355, might be called *Aylwin*. Thereafter, the older destroyer was referred to simply as *DD-47*. Her name was struck from the Navy list on 8 March 1935, and she was sold for scrap in accordance with the terms of the London Treaty for the limitation of naval armament.

### III

(DD-355: dp. 1,375; l. 341'3"; dr. 16'4"; s. 37.0 k.; cpl. 251; a. 5 5", 8 21" tt., 4 .50-cal. mg., 2 dct.; cl. *Farragut*)

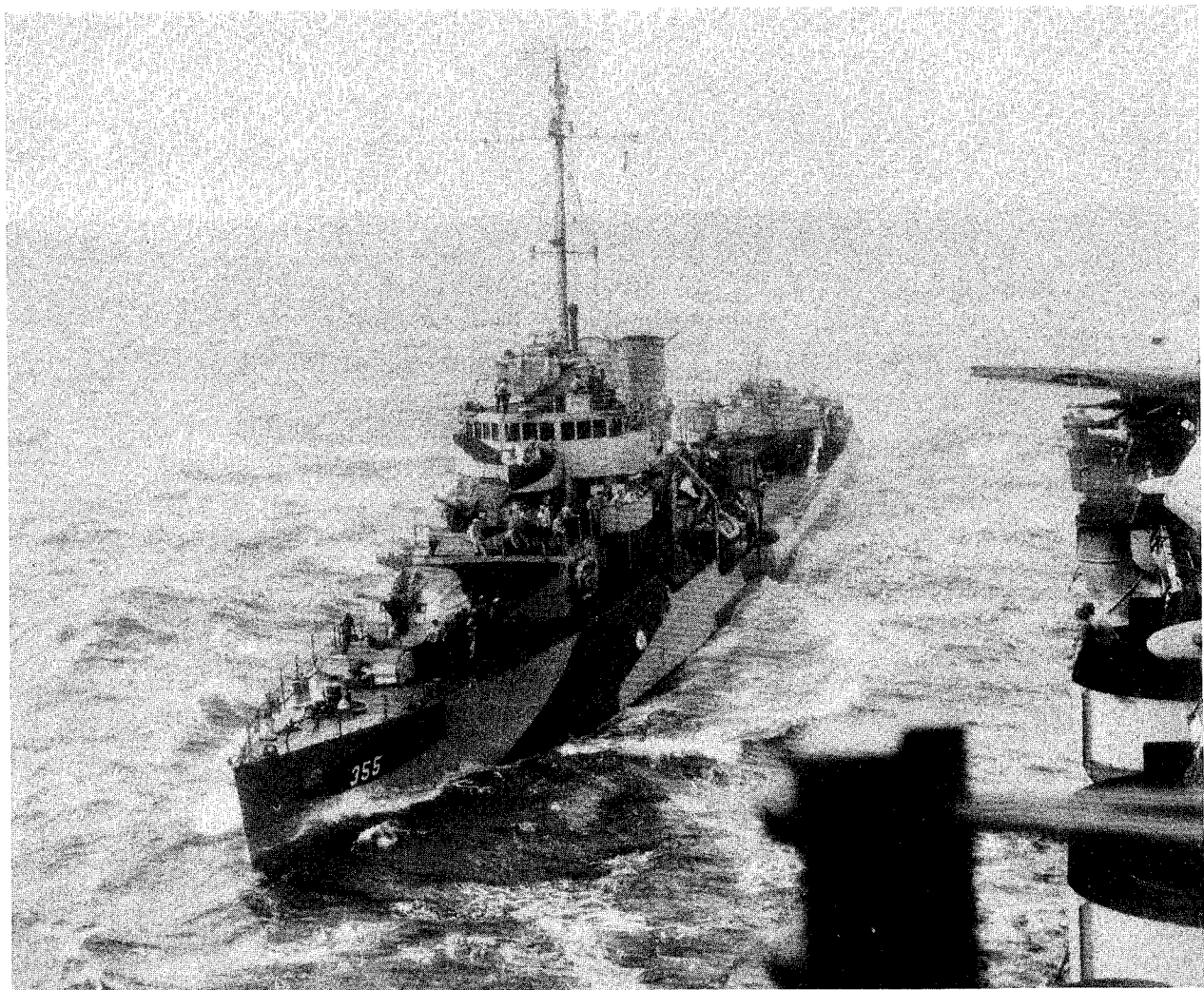
The third *Aylwin* (DD-355) was laid down on 23 September 1933 by the Philadelphia Navy Yard; launched on 10 July 1934; sponsored by Miss Elizabeth M. Farley, the 11-year old daughter of Postmaster General James M. Farley; and commissioned on 1 March 1935, Comdr. Clarence Gulbranson in command.

Following builders' trials late in March, and fitting out, the destroyer shifted to the Naval Torpedo Station, Newport, R.I., to load eight torpedo warheads. At the end of further trials, she returned to Philadelphia on 8 May to prepare for shakedown.

On 22 May, *Aylwin* sailed for a cruise that took her to European countries. She stopped at Port Leixoes (Oporto), Portugal, on 1 June and at Santander, Spain, on the 5th, before shifting to Cherbourg, France, on the 10th. Five days later, the Honorable Jesse I. Strauss, the United States Ambassador to France, inspected the new destroyer.

The warship next visited Bremen, Germany from 19 to 24 June, before sailing for Goteborg, Sweden, and a five-day visit. Then, after getting underway for Belgium on the 29th, she reached Brussels late on 2 July and there received her only royal visit when, on the morning of the 8th, King Leopold III and Queen Astrid came on board for an hour's inspection.

The ship visited Dover, England, before heading homeward on 15 July. She reached Philadelphia on the 22d, received post-shakedown repairs, and conducted further trials that lasted until 1 October, when she put to sea to join the Fleet. She fell in with



*Aylwin* (DD-355), painted in Measure 31 or 32 camouflage, comes alongside an escort carrier to transfer guard mail, December 1944. (80-G-263910)

her sister ship *Hull* (DD-350) the next day, and the two ships reached Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on the 5th, where *Aylwin* unloaded a cargo of light freight. After transiting the Panama Canal on 7 October, she paused briefly at Balboa, Canal Zone, before sailing on the 10th for a plane-guard station off Champerico, Guatemala, to provide a directional bearing along the projected track of the experimental flying boat XP3Y-1, the prototype of the PBV "Catalina" which would win fame during World War II. This plane had already completed a non-stop flight from Norfolk to Coco Solo, Canal Zone, and, as an "encore," would fly, again non-stop, from Coco Solo to San Francisco.

*Aylwin* reached her assigned position on 13 October and, the next morning, began laying smoke to serve as marker for the plane. The destroyer's lookouts sighted the plane at 1238, and it passed directly overhead seven minutes later. Ultimately, the XP3Y-1 reached San Francisco Bay on 15 October, having set a new international distance record for seaplane flights—3,281.402 statute miles.

The destroyer rejoined *Hull* the next day; and the two ships steamed into San Diego harbor on the 19th. After a visit to Stockton, Calif., from 26 to 29 October, *Aylwin* began her peace-time duty with the Fleet, operating off the coast of southern California in flotilla tactics, torpedo attacks, short range battle practices, and sound training runs with the submarines *Nautilus* (SS-168) and *Cuttlefish* (SS-171).

On 10 February 1936, *Aylwin* departed San Diego and entered the Mare Island Navy Yard on the following day for repairs and alterations. She ran her post-repair trials on 3 April.

Following brief operations off Pyramid Cove, San Clemente Island, *Aylwin* sailed for the Canal Zone on 27 April to participate in Fleet Problem XVII, a five-phased evolution designed to advance the strategical, tactical, and logistical training of the fleet in a wide variety of areas, including antisubmarine warfare, offensive operations of submarines, and the development of aircraft and surface scouting techniques. The problem pitted the Battle Force against a submarine-augmented Scouting Force.

As the opposing forces engaged off the west coast of Central America near the Panama Canal, *Aylwin* conducted simulated gun attacks on "enemy" destroyers and torpedo attacks on the "enemy" battle line. She anchored off Balboa on 9 May, refueled the following day, and resumed her participation in the fleet problem on the 16th as part of the "Green" fleet.

After the exercises, *Aylwin* sailed to Peru and arrived at Callao on the morning of 28 May. That day, Rear Admiral Sinclair Gannon, Commander, Destroyers, Scouting Force, broke his flag in *Aylwin*. Winding up her Peruvian visit on 2 June, she got underway for California, but paused in Panama Bay from 6 to 8 June before continuing on to San Diego. *Aylwin* reached her home port on the morning of 16 June and moored alongside *Dobbin* (AD-3). That afternoon, Rear Admiral Gannon transferred his flag to the destroyer tender.

On 6 July, *Aylwin* got underway for the Pacific Northwest and reached Port Angeles, Wash., on the 9th. She sailed thence via the inland passage to Alaska and arrived at Cordova on the 13th. Following a subsequent visit to Kodiak, a return call at Port Angeles, and tender upkeep there alongside *Dobbin*, the destroyer conducted sound tracking exercises at Admiralty Bay, Port Townsend, Wash. She visited Portland, Oreg., from 5 to 10 August before heading home where she arrived on the 13th.

A week later, she got underway for tactical exercises in company with *Worden* (DD-352) and *Monaghan* (DD-354); but they soon commenced looking for the overdue San Diego-based tuna boat SS *San Juanquin*, last reported in their vicinity. The Coast Guard cutter *Tahoe* joined the search on 21 August, and the cutter *Aurora* began the next day. On the 23d, *Aylwin* and the other ships, sailing in a scouting line, searched for the overdue full-rigged ship *Pacific Queen*. Although they did not find either vessel, it seems that neither was lost, since both appeared on merchant vessel registers for some years thereafter. In fact, the latter—bearing her original name, *Balclutha*—served as a floating museum berthed at San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf into the 1980's.

*Aylwin* operated in the southern California area until sailing on 16 April 1937 for the Hawaiian Islands to participate in Fleet Problem XVIII. Forming up with the "Hilo Detachment" on the 21st, *Aylwin* conducted a mock bombardment of Hilo before deploying to screen *Houston* (CA-30) and *Ranger* (CV-4) as they covered a simulated landing. Putting into Pearl Harbor on 25

April, *Aylwin* got underway on 4 May as part of the "White" Force.

Rated as "damaged" in an initial phase of the action on 8 May, *Aylwin* shaped course to rendezvous with "friendly" units that morning and drove off two "strafing" attacks by "Black" planes en route. She sighted what appeared to be the "White" battle line at 0640 and altered course to join, but discovered that the ships were, in fact, counted as "out of action."

Thus now virtually "alone," *Aylwin* came about and headed for Lahaina. The beleaguered ship found no solace en route, however, for she spotted three fast minelayers closing from six miles away, and after identifying them as "enemy," went to general quarters at 0730, "opening fire" three minutes later. However, the umpires quickly declared her *hors de combat* so she joined her "out of action" consorts soon thereafter.

*Aylwin* returned to San Diego on 28 May 1937 and, after two weeks of upkeep alongside *Whitney*, resumed her training schedule. During the last days of June, she operated in company with *Mississippi* (BB-41) as that ship conducted battle practice off Santa Barbara Island in company with the radio-controlled, high-speed target ship *Lamberton* (AG-21).

For the rest of 1937 and the winter months of early 1938, *Aylwin* maintained what had become standard routine, alternating periods in port for upkeep with time training at sea in the southern California operating area. From 6 to 9 January 1938, she participated in the search for a lost patrol plane from Patrol Squadron (VP) 7. After firing antiaircraft practices in early February, the ship proceeded to the Destroyer Base, San Diego, for her yearly hull inspection in the floating drydock *ARD-1* and then proceeded to the Mare Island Navy Yard for a brief overhaul.

Following those repairs, *Aylwin* arrived at San Diego on the 6th, just in time to participate in Fleet Problem XIX. The "Black" Fleet put to sea from San Diego at 0325 on 15 March. As part of the "White" Fleet, *Aylwin* got underway at 1640 and soon joined the remainder of Destroyer Flotilla 1 and the aircraft carrier *Ranger* (CV-4).

Searching for the enemy "main body" on the 17th, she fell in with *Chicago* (CA-29), *Quincy* (CA-39), *Chester* (CA-27), and *Portland* (CA-33) on the following morning. That afternoon, the cruisers made contact, attacked, and retired under cover of a smoke screen. *Aylwin* regained sight of the "enemy" and took up a position a safe distance astern to trail them through the 19th.

After fueling from *Idaho* (BB-42) on the 20th, the destroyer conducted exercises in subsequent phases of Fleet Problem XIX until supporting a mock landing at Lahaina. At the outset, she lay-to between the islands of Molokai, Lanai, and Maui before standing in toward the "beachhead" to support the landing of troops. She conducted a brief minesweeping drill before refueling from *Brazos* (AO-4) and then anchoring at Lahaina Roads for a brief respite.

From 4 to 8 April, *Aylwin* again was underway participating in further exercises before putting into Pearl Harbor. When the fleet sortied on the morning of the 18th, she ranged ahead of the departing battleships alert for possible "submarine" activity. Ultimately, *Aylwin* participated in the closing phases of Fleet Problem XIX, which had been conducted in three separate phases, each a small fleet problem in itself. As in Fleet Problem XVII, the exercises also tested the ability of the fleet to seize and hold advanced bases, indicating the Navy's Pacific-minded planning.

The destroyer returned to San Diego on 28 April and, on 9 May, resumed her coastwise training schedule. She underwent brief upkeep alongside *Whitney* before getting underway on 21 June for the Pacific Northwest and cruising along the coast through July, touching at such places as Port Angeles, Wash.; Ketchikan, Territory of Alaska; Humpback Bay, Wrangell Narrows, Taku Inlet, Yakutat Bay, Sitka, Seattle; and finally, Portland, Oreg. She returned via San Francisco to San Diego in mid-August, underwent tender upkeep alongside *Whitney*, and conducted training off the southern California coast before getting underway on 26 September for Hawaii.

Reaching Pearl Harbor on 2 October, *Aylwin* underwent repairs and alterations there through November. She arrived back at San Diego on 12 December and conducted training exercises off the South Coronados Island of Mexico before ending the year 1938 berthed in a destroyer nest in San Diego harbor.

Four days into 1939, *Aylwin* got underway for Panama and reached Balboa on 13 January. After transiting the Panama Canal the next day, she operated out of Gonaives, Haiti; Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; and, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, before getting underway on the 13th for her initial station during Fleet Problem XX.

These exercises, slated to take place in the Caribbean, were formulated to test the ability of an American fleet to control the Caribbean Sea lanes while maintaining sufficient naval strength in the Pacific to protect vital United States interests there and to exercise the fleet in: long-range search operations, the protection of merchantmen, the establishment and defense of advanced bases, and the conduct of the inevitable fleet battle. They arrayed the Battle Force against the Scouting Force.

After fueling from *Maryland* (BB-46) on 17 February, *Aylwin* operated with *Lexington* (CV-2) and *Enterprise* (CV-6) which acted as a raiding force during one phase of the problem. Ultimately, the "battle" reached its conclusion, the fleet battle. The forces then all retired to Culebra Bay, Puerto Rico, where President Roosevelt reviewed them from the deck of *Houston* on the last day of February.

After visiting Cienfuegos and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, *Aylwin* operated briefly out of Gonaives before returning to Guantanamo on 31 March. She got underway on 8 April for Yorktown, Va., and, en route north, acted as plane guard for *Lexington*. *Aylwin* reached Yorktown on 12 April, but the Fleet's visit to that area was soon cut short by orders to return to the Pacific. Speculation ran rampant through the Fleet that Washington was very concerned about possible aggressive moves by the Japanese.

Underway at 0404 on 20 April, *Aylwin* took station with the rest of her division around the carriers. She plane guarded for *Yorktown* (CV-5) en route to Panama; transited the Canal on 29 April; and, after tarrying briefly at Balboa, got underway for San Diego on 2 May. Reaching her home port on the 12th, the destroyer operated off southern California before entering the Mare Island Navy Yard on 18 June for repairs and alterations lasting until 8 October. She got underway on the morning of 11 October, bound once more for Hawaii.

The administration, harboring strong concern over Japan's aggressive course in the Far East, determined that a show of force was necessary. Accordingly, the Navy formed a "Hawaiian Detachment" under Vice Admiral Adolphus Andrews and based it at Pearl Harbor—a step foreshadowing the basing of the entire Fleet there the following spring.

*Aylwin* arrived at Pearl Harbor on 18 October 1939 and, over the next few months, alternated periods inport at "Pearl" with varied exercises in the Hawaiian operating area. In the spring of 1940, *Aylwin*, as a unit of the "maroon" fleet, participated in Fleet Problem XXI, the last pre-war fleet problem. Indicative of the Fleet's security-mindedness at that time, *Aylwin* alternated with other destroyers conducting "security patrols" off the port of Honolulu and off Pearl Harbor's entrance during the course of the evolutions, investigating all vessels sighted, including small fishing craft.

Detachments from the Fleet were rotated back to the west coast at intervals. *Aylwin* thus returned briefly to the west coast during the summer of 1940, reaching San Diego on 9 July before shifting to the Mare Island Navy Yard on the 14th. She underwent repairs and alterations there until 22 September before returning, via San Diego, to Pearl Harbor on 21 October.

From that port, *Aylwin* maintained her normal routine into the critical year 1941. On 7 February 1941, she put to sea and, after rendezvousing with aircraft carrier *Enterprise* and sister destroyer *Farragut*, headed back to the west coast for a brief visit. They arrived at San Diego on 13 February, but turned around again two days later and rejoined *Enterprise*—which was ferrying a shipment of the latest Army fighter aircraft to Hawaii. The three ships reached Oahu on 21 February.

On 17 March, *Aylwin* left Pearl Harbor for off-shore patrol and exercises. Two days later, the ship conducted a two-hour night tactical exercise on a dark, moonless night, commencing at 2000. At its conclusion, all destroyers were directed to proceed to a rendezvous astern of the fleet's center. At 2251, *Aylwin* turned on her running and fighting lights and sighted a ship materializing out of the murk on her port bow. *Aylwin* maintained her course and speed until backing emergency full at 2303. At that point, the other ship, *Farragut*, loomed on a collision course and also backed to avoid contact. Shortly after 2304, *Farragut*'s bow sliced into *Aylwin*'s port side at a 90-degree angle, causing extensive damage for about 23 frames and nearly severing *Aylwin*'s bow.

A fire immediately blazed up as high as *Aylwin*'s masthead, illuminating the two ships and quickly spread aft through the wardroom and into the area occupied by the ships officers' cabins. *Aylwin*'s electrical installation burned with intense heat until controlled at 0140 on the 20th. Fire parties from *Dale*, *Stack* (DD-406), *Philadelphia* (CL-41), and *Sterett* (DD-407) all contributed men to help contain the blaze; and a party from *Indianapolis* joined the one from *Philadelphia* in assessing the damage and making temporary repairs.

*Detroit* (CL-8) attempted to tow *Aylwin* back to Pearl Harbor but the cable parted. *Turkey* (AM-13) soon picked up the damaged destroyer and towed her to port stern first. Following extensive repairs in drydock, *Aylwin* resumed her operations in the Hawaiian waters. After conducting her last peacetime training late in November, she moored to buoy X-14 at 1347 on the 28th, and remained there into the first week of December. On the night of the 6th, her watch logged in some of the last peacetime ship movements into, or out of, Pearl Harbor, duly noting the arrival of the oiler *Neosho* (AO-23) and the departure of the destroyer *Litchfield* (DD-336).

As *Aylwin* lay moored in a nest with her squadron mates on the morning of 7 December 1941, one small boiler was in operation to provide enough power for auxiliary services on board. Approximately half of her men were enjoying leave and liberty that weekend. At 0755 that Sunday morning, shortly before morning colors, the sound of airplane engines surprised *Aylwin*'s men and countless other bluejackets. At that time, Japanese planes torpedoed the target ship *Utah* (AG-16) moored to a quay off Ford Island.

Three minutes later, *Aylwin*'s guns began to speak, both her main battery and the .50-caliber machine guns. At 0800, the "black gang" lit fires under two boilers, cutting them in on her main steam line within 15 minutes. At 0829, Commander, Destroyers Battle Force directed his ships to get underway. *Monaghan*, soon after beginning to move toward the harbor entrance at 0845, encountered a midget submarine and rammed and sank the small submersible. At about 0850, a Japanese plane dropped a bomb that exploded some 75 yards off *Aylwin*'s starboard bow. Eight minutes later, *Aylwin*, leaving her stern wire and anchor chain behind, headed for the channel and the open sea.

The destroyer, manned by 50 percent of her crew under the direction of four ensigns—the senior officer, Ensign Caplan, had served at sea for only some eight months—proceeded out of Pearl Harbor, stripping ship for war and simultaneously maintaining a "continuous fire." Her machine gunners claimed to have splashed at least three aircraft; but, in the light of the tremendous volume of antiaircraft fire from all ships, her "kills" cannot be proven conclusively.

As *Aylwin* raced out to sea, those men topside who chanced to look astern beheld a curious sight, her captain, Lt. Comdr. Robert H. Rodgers, and other officers, in a motor launch about 1,000 yards off the entrance buoys. Nevertheless, in view of ComDesRon 1's instructions, *Aylwin* could not slow down, but instead headed out to sea for patrol duty, leaving most of her officers orphans on board the old flushdecker *Chew* (DD-106).

A little less than a half hour later, *Aylwin* investigated a reported submarine sighting, but found nothing. During the patrol, the destroyer vibrated abnormally because of a screw damaged soon after she got underway when a bomb explosion near her starboard quarter threw her stern into a buoy.

On 12 December, after the smoke over Oahu had cleared, Comdr. Rodgers heaped praise on his abbreviated crew for their actions in the first flush of war: "The conduct of the personnel was magnificent . . . Every man more than did his job and was eager to fight." Of Ensign Caplan, Rodgers wrote, "The conduct (of this man) . . . in superbly taking command for 36 hours during war operations of the severest type is a most amazing and outstanding achievement."

Late on the afternoon of 8 December, *Aylwin* followed the *Enterprise* task force into Pearl Harbor and picked up Rodgers and the division commander, Comdr. R. S. Riggs, on the way into the channel. The next day, *Aylwin* got underway and conducted antisubmarine patrols in sector 2, off the entrance to Pearl Harbor. She made a sound contact on 10 December. After going to general quarters, she dropped a five-charge pattern. *Farragut* joined her in the hunt, but neither ship found the quarry. Entering Pearl Harbor again on the 11th, *Aylwin* underwent repairs to her damaged propeller.

Meanwhile, plans matured for an operation a part of which

was hoped to be the first American offensive action of the war, the relief of Wake Island. One task force would head for Wake with relief aircraft in *Saratoga* (CV-3)—while a second force, built around *Lexington*, would raid the Mandated Islands as a diversion.

*Aylwin* sortied as part of the latter at 1103 on 14 December and, along with the heavy cruisers *Chicago* and *Portland* and the destroyer *Phelps* (DD-361), took station ahead of *Lexington*. The next day, destroyers *Dewey* and *Worden*, the cruiser *Indianapolis*, and the oiler *Neosho* joined the force. On the 20th, *Aylwin*'s war diarist recorded: "Up to this point, the force had been headed for a bombing and bombardment of Wotje Island, in the Marshalls. Now we were to try to save Wake."

However, time was running out for the American marines on that little atoll. Two Japanese carriers had joined the forces attempting to reduce the valiant defenders. This move prompted a careful reconsideration and resulting cancellation of the relief attempt. The terse entry in *Aylwin*'s war diary for 23 December reveals little of the bitter disappointment felt by all hands in the relief effort: "At 0758 (the) force was informed by despatch that a large portion of the Jap fleet was concentrated just beyond Wake Island and that we were to proceed back to Pearl Harbor . . ." Wake fell on that same day.

After investigating several suspected submarine contacts en route, *Aylwin* covered the arrival of TF 11 at Pearl Harbor three days after Christmas. On the last day of 1941, *Aylwin* sortied from Pearl Harbor in the screen of a convoy taking evacuees from the Hawaiian Islands to the west coast where she served five days into 1942.

*Aylwin* then underwent repairs and alterations in the Mare Island Navy Yard until 10 January, receiving new 20-millimeter machine guns to increase her close-in antiaircraft capability. Two days later, she sailed with *Perkins* (DD-377) to escort the liners *President Coolidge*, *President Monroe*, and *Mariposa* to San Francisco. Underway again on the 17th, *Aylwin* and *Perkins* escorted a convoy consisting of *Neosho*, *Castor* (AKS-1), *Pyro* (AE-1), and *Crescent City* (AP-40) back to Oahu where they arrived on the 25th.

On the last day of January, the destroyer sortied with TF 11, formed around *Lexington*, and performed plane-guard duties for that carrier as she moved southwestward toward New Guinea. After accidentally firing a live torpedo in *Hull*'s direction during surface attack maneuvers on 13 February, *Aylwin* warned her sister ship by blinker, enabling the latter to sheer away out of danger. *Aylwin* followed the errant "fish" at 28 knots until it sank at the end of a normal run.

Three days later, the ANZAC command cruise force—*Chicago*, HMNZS *Leander*, HMNZS *Achilles*, and HMAS *Australia*, screened by *Lamson* (DD-367) and *Perkins*—pulled into sight. As the destroyers formed a circular screen, the heavy ships hove to and transferred officers for a conference. Shortly thereafter, TF 11 reformed and assumed a northwesterly course toward Bougainville Island and the Bismarck Archipelago.

Unfortunately, before a raid against the key Japanese base at Rabaul could be launched, Japanese reconnaissance planes discovered the task force. Accordingly, 17 land-based Mitsubishi G4M bombers (later code-named "Betties") set out from Rabaul, New Britain.

*Lexington*'s CXAM air search radar picked up the incoming raiders at 1030, and the task force increased speed to 21 knots. As the enemy formation approached, lookouts could see that the carrier's fighters were already shrinking the enemy's numbers. In fact, during the defense of their carrier, Fighting Squadron (VF) 3 pilots performed most creditably. One pilot, Lt. Edward H. "Butch" O'Hare, downed five or six enemy planes in about as many minutes.

While *Lexington*'s Grumman "Wildcats" above were thinning out the attackers, the ships' gunners below were also helping out, putting up a tremendous barrage of antiaircraft fire. *Aylwin*'s spotters noted one enemy bomber falling in flames after bursts from their ship had exploded in its vicinity. Then, when a second wave attempted to breach the screen of the task force, *Aylwin*'s 20-millimeter guns downed an enemy bomber attempting to crash into the stern of nearby *Bagley* (DD-386). "By 1712," recorded *Aylwin*'s diarist, "no enemy planes were in view and ship ceased firing, having expended 305 rounds." The force's gunnery had been good, for the following day *Aylwin*'s historian would write: "OTC [officer in tactical command] reported to the Task Force that of an estimated 18 planes that attacked

the formation yesterday only one probably returned safely to his base at Rabaul . . ." No ship in the formation was damaged.

However, since it had been discovered, the American force retired from the area. *Aylwin* soon left TF 11 to escort the fleet oiler *Platte* (AO-24) to Pago Pago, Samoa, and then shepherded that vital auxiliary back to Pearl Harbor, reaching port on 8 March.

Two days later, *Aylwin* began screening the 18 ships of convoy 4072 from Honolulu to San Francisco Bay where they arrived on 22 March. Following repairs at the Mare Island Navy Yard, she sortied on the 31st as part of the screen for Hawaii-bound convoy 2054.

Reaching Pearl Harbor on 12 April, *Aylwin* returned to sea on the 15th with TF 11. En route to the South Pacific on the 18th, *Lexington* flew off a squadron of 14 Marine Brewster F2A-3's (the reconstituted VMF-211) to Palmyra Island.

Meanwhile, intelligence reported a substantial enemy movement toward New Guinea and Australia, probably aimed at strategic Port Moresby. Accordingly, on 26 April, *Lexington* and her screen received orders to rendezvous with TF 17 on 1 May. When they met that morning, the two forces came under the latter's commander, Rear Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher, in *Yorktown*. *Aylwin* was assigned to *Lexington*'s plane guard.

The next few days passed quietly until, about two hours after securing from usual dawn general quarters alert on 7 May, *Aylwin* received word that an enemy force of two carriers and four cruisers was some 200 miles distant. At 0955, *Aylwin* observed *Lexington* launch fighters and torpedo planes for the attack. Shortly thereafter, *Yorktown*'s aircraft also took to the air.

The American planes sank the Japanese light carrier *Shoho*, but did not touch the other enemy carriers—Pearl Harbor veterans *Zuikaku* and *Shokaku*. Three of their planes which hunted fruitlessly for the American task force entered *Yorktown*'s landing circle at 1910, but antiaircraft fire knocked down one and forced the other two away.

Other Japanese planes, though, acting on an erroneous sighting of a carrier and cruiser, dispatched the oiler *Neosho* and destroyer *Sims* (DD-409). At 0114 on the 8th, *Monaghan* received orders to leave the disposition and search for survivors of the two ill-fated ships.

Later that morning, *Lexington*'s radar picked up an aircraft contact 18 miles distant, while American scouts almost simultaneously picked up the scent of the enemy's two carriers, four cruisers, and three destroyers. Soon thereafter, the enemy character of that force established definitely, *Yorktown* and *Lexington* launched their strike forces at 0900 and 0905, respectively.

Meanwhile, *Aylwin* had been at general quarters since 0844 and, when enemy planes were reported closing two hours later, took station between the heavy cruisers *Chester* and *New Orleans* (CA-32), 3,000 yards from *Yorktown*. She maintained that position during the ensuing battle, conforming her movements to those of *Yorktown*. She fired 150 rounds of 5-inch ammunition and 950 rounds of 20-millimeter fighting the enemy planes.

Other ships were not so fortunate. *Yorktown* had been damaged, as had *Lexington*, the latter fatally. After an SBD-3 of Scouting Squadron (VS) 5 (*Yorktown*) ditched near *Aylwin*, the destroyer altered course to pick up the pilot, Ens. J. H. Jorgenson, USNR, and his rear-seat man, Radioman 3d Class A. W. Brunetti.

Steaming through an oily wake caused by fuel spilling from a ruptured tank in *Lexington*, *Aylwin* observed smoke issuing from the wounded carrier's starboard quarter as she rejoined the formation at 1405. At about the same time, returning American aircraft drew fire from jittery gunners in some of the ships of the screen before their "friendly" character was established.

*Lexington*, rocked by internal explosions and ravaged by uncontrollable fires, ultimately had to be sunk by American torpedoes. Soon thereafter, the task force retired from the scene of battle toward the Tonga Islands. While alongside *New Orleans* to refuel two days later, *Aylwin* rigged breeches buoys forward and aft, and took on board 37 officers and 92 enlisted men from *Lexington* and one *Yorktown* pilot, Lt. (jg.) E. S. McCuskey, of VF-42, who would later become an "ace" in the Battle of Midway. That task completed, the destroyer cast off and resumed her screening duties.

On the morning of 15 May, *Aylwin* drew alongside *Yorktown* and transferred charts of the Tonga Islands to the carrier. Less than an hour later, while the carrier's planes flew protective cover, TF 17 entered Nukualofa Harbor, Tongatabu, where *Ayl-*



win transferred her passengers to *Portland* while fueling from the heavy cruiser. She then served as channel entrance guard until relieved by *Anderson* (DD-411) the following day.

In turn relieving *Hammann* (DD-412) on the morning of the 17th, *Aylwin* patrolled off the entrance to the harbor during the sortie of TF 17 from Nukualofa and then joined *Astoria* (CA-34) in escorting transport *Barnett* (AP-11)—carrying *Lexington* survivors gathered from all rescue ships of the task force—on the first leg of her voyage back to the west coast of the United States. Later that day, after *Barnett* suffered an engine casualty, *Aylwin* remained with the transport until she completed the repairs. Six days later, TF 17 reached Pearl Harbor.

The following day, 28 May, *Aylwin* got underway to sortie in the screen of *Enterprise* and *Hornet* (CV-8) as those carriers proceeded to waters north of Midway to lie in ambush for a Japanese armada heading for that important atoll. While the task force steamed northwestward in the days that followed, the ships in its screen fired their guns against 5-inch bursts which in turn had been fired to simulate all varieties of air attack—dive-bombing and torpedo-bombing included. As the ships neared the optimistically named "Point Luck," the pace of training slowed to one of watchful waiting. Then, after a day or so of "sparring," the contest began in earnest on 4 June, as Midway's radar picked up the approaching enemy.

*Enterprise* and *Hornet* launched strikes as did *Yorktown*—almost miraculously repaired after being severely damaged during the battle of the Coral Sea. The torpedo planes from the American carriers suffered grievous losses from Japanese flak and fighters, but dive bombers from *Yorktown* and *Enterprise* fared better, dropping lethal loads of bombs on *Akagi*, *Kaga*, and *Soryu* that turned all three into burning and exploding cauldrons.

The Japanese planes managed to locate TF 17 and launched a determined attack that stopped *Yorktown* dead in the water. That carrier's crew managed to get her underway again, but a second Japanese attack hit her again, causing her abandonment. Later that day, American carrier-based planes sent the fourth Japanese carrier, *Hiryu* to a watery grave. A Japanese submarine subsequently caught *Yorktown* while she was being salvaged and scored fatal torpedo hits.

The Battle of Midway stopped Japan's thrust across the Pacific and cost her four irreplaceable carriers and many trained sailors and airmen. Allied prospects in that part of the world brightened after the Battle of the Coral Sea and began to glare after Midway.

On 11 June, *Aylwin* broke off from Hawaii-bound TF 16 to escort oiler *Kaskaskia* (AO-27) northward toward the Aleutian Islands to fuel the warships of TF 8. Over the next five days, the two ships proceeded through foggy and rainy weather until meeting *Humphries* (DD-236) and *Gilmer* (DD-233) on 16 June. *Aylwin* screened while the older "flush-deckers" fueled from *Kaskaskia*.

The following day, *Aylwin* joined TF 8—which included heavy cruiser *Louisville* (CA-28), three light cruisers, and six destroyers—for operations in the inhospitable northern waters. But for two escort runs to Women's Bay, Kodiak Island, Alaska, she worked with that task force until getting underway on 10 July to escort *Kaskaskia* back to the Hawaiian Islands. On the 13th, the oiler transferred her, remaining fuel to *Guadalupe* (AO-32) and the two ships reached Oahu four days later. The destroyer spent the remainder of July in the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard undergoing repairs.

Meanwhile, enemy message traffic indicated that Japan was building an airfield on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. Such an installation would pose an unacceptable threat to Allied shipping from the United States to Australia and New Zealand. Accordingly, the target of an Allied thrust into the South Pacific was shifted from the Santa Cruz Islands to Guadalcanal.

As the forces gathered in the South Pacific to launch the first Allied offensive of the war and headed toward their objective, *Aylwin* completed her post-repair trials and then departed Pearl Harbor on 2 August to screen the escort carrier *Long Island* (AVG-1) which had embarked the marine air units earmarked to operate from the airfield on Guadalcanal after its capture. The planes, Douglas SBD-3's of VMSB-232 under Major Richard C. Mangrum and Grumman F4F-4's of VMF-232 under Major John L. Smith, USMC (who would later win a Medal of Honor on Guadalcanal), came under the forward echelon of Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 23, under the group executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Charles L. Fike, USMC.

On 7 August, as *Aylwin* and her charge headed across the Pacific, the marines of the 1st Marine Division splashed ashore on Guadalcanal, Tulagi, and Gavutu. On that day, the officers and men in *Aylwin* and *Long Island* conducted the festivities traditional to crossing the equator.

Meanwhile, the invasion proceeded well; the marines secured a beachhead on Guadalcanal by late on the 7th; Tulagi and Gavutu, defended to the death, held out until early on the 8th. That night, however, a Japanese cruiser force destroyed four Allied heavy cruisers and damaged a fifth in the Battle of Savo Island. That news, combined with the withdrawal of the three carriers supporting "Watchtower," prompted orders on the 10th for *Aylwin* and her charge to put into Suva, Fiji, to fuel and there await further instructions.

*Aylwin* and *Long Island* reached Suva on 13 August, covered on the last leg of their voyage by a PBY flying boat. The "further orders" came soon enough, directing the destroyer and the carrier to the New Hebrides. They arrived at Fila Harbor, Efate, during the forenoon watch on 17 August. Reaching Mele Bay, Efate, on the 17th, the ships soon received their new sailing directions. On the following afternoon, *Aylwin*, *Dale* (DD-353), and *Helena* (CL-50) got underway to screen *Long Island* during the carrier's passage to Guadalcanal. Then, on the afternoon of the 20th, *Long Island* reached her "flying off" point, and catapulted off the 19 F4F-4's and 12 SBD-3's, 200 miles southeast of Guadalcanal. The timely arrival of *Long Island*'s charges at Henderson Field provided the marines with the air support they so desperately needed in those early days of Operation "Watchtower" and not a day too soon.

Two days later, the little squadron arrived back at Efate, where *Cimarron* (AO-22) replenished *Aylwin*'s thirsty fuel bunkers. Over the ensuing days, the destroyer conducted offshore patrols at Efate before receiving orders on 30 August to escort *Long Island* to Espiritu Santo to embark survivors of the sunken destroyer *Tucker* (DD-374)—which had struck a mine while entering Second Channel on 1 August.

After refueling at Pago Pago, Samoa, on 6 September, *Aylwin* met *Conyngham* (DD-371), *Raleigh* (CL-7), and *Wharton* (AP-7) off Canton Island on 11 September and screened the latter as that transport disembarked troops there.

Forming TG 15.4, *Aylwin* and *Conyngham* shepherded *Wharton*, via Suva, toward Noumea before *Aylwin* was directed on the 18th to proceed to Tongatabu to join *North Carolina* (BB-55) for duty and to escort that torpedo-damaged battleship back to Pearl Harbor for repairs. Late on the afternoon of the 30th, she and *Dale* safely reached Hawaiian waters with their charge; and *Aylwin* moored alongside *Dixie* (AD-14) for upkeep.

*Aylwin* spent most of October training in Hawaiian waters and then escorted a convoy to Espiritu Santo which she reached on 7 November.

Because of Japanese submarine activity in the Santa Cruz Islands, *Aylwin* arrived at Vanikoro Island on the 10th to protect *Ballard* (AVD-10). After protecting that seaplane tender, four days later, she escorted *Ballard* to Vanua Levu to pick up sick Army coastwatchers before returning to Espiritu Santo for fuel from the oiler *Tappahannock* (AO-43).

During a brief patrol out of Espiritu Santo, *Aylwin* developed trouble in her steering engine. Once repaired, the ship conducted channel entrance patrols there, before joining *Russell* (DD-414) in planeguarding *Nassau* (CVE-12) between 19 and 22 November.

After reaching Noumea, *Aylwin* escorted the damaged battleship *South Dakota* (BB-59) from Tongatabu before refueling at Bora Bora, in the Society Islands, on 1 December. The destroyer then steamed to California, passed through the Golden Gate on 10 December, and underwent repairs at the Mare Island Navy Yard into the new year. She departed San Francisco on 8 January 1943, bound for Alaska in company with *Bancroft* (DD-598) and *Dale*, and arrived at Dutch Harbor five days later. Over the next three months, *Aylwin* conducted escort missions in the Aleutians.

Shifting southward, she then worked with *Nassau* during flight training before shifting north to Dutch Harbor to take part in the invasion of Attu. The landings commenced on 11 May 1943 and were covered by the naval forces under Rear Admirals Thomas C. Kincaid and Francis W. Rockwell.

Some two months later, *Aylwin* shelled anti-aircraft gun positions on Kiska on the night of 8 and 9 July. Approaching her target under an overcast sky, she maneuvered into range guided solely by her SG radar. Utilizing director-controlled indirect fire, the destroyer made two passes at that island, firing 46 rounds of

5-inch on the first run and 38 rounds on the second. She subsequently bombarded the enemy's main camp on Kiska on the evening of 2 August, unaware that shortly before—on 28 July—the Japanese had skillfully evacuated their entire force. The ensuing Allied landings on 15 August, found only three dogs left behind.

Departing Adak on 31 August, *Aylwin* steamed to San Francisco and remained in the Bay area through mid-October. Leaving the west coast on the 19th, the destroyer served as part of the screen for the escort carriers *Sangamon* (CVE-26), *Chenango* (CVE-28), and *Suwannee* (CVE-27) as they sailed toward the New Hebrides and arrived at Espiritu Santo on 5 November.

From mid-November through the first week of December 1943, *Aylwin* screened carriers *Sangamon* and *Suwannee* during the operations to capture the Gilbert Islands. Detached on 8 December, she joined *Bailey* (DD-492) in escorting *Maryland* (BB-46) to Pearl Harbor where they arrived on the 14th. She then helped to screen that battleship along with *Tennessee* and *Colorado* to San Francisco which they reached four days before Christmas.

Following repairs at Alameda, Calif., by Union Engineering, Ltd., *Aylwin* picked up a convoy of tank landing ships and motor minesweepers at San Diego to escort to Hawaii. After tarrying at Kauai between 16 and 20 January 1944, she moved on to the Marshalls, reaching Kwajalein on the last day of the month. But for a run to Majuro and back between 8 and 11 February, she served there until shifting to Eniwetok on the 21st to join *Hall* (DD-583), *MacDonough*, and *Monaghan* in delivering fire support that night to soften up defensive works on Parry Island for marines who were about to land there. When released from fire support duty at 0630 on the 22d, she had expended 480 rounds of 5-inch AA common and 20 rounds of white phosphorus.

The destroyer then reported to Commander, Southern Screen, for duty. Steaming back to Kwajalein on 26 February, *Aylwin* patrolled off Eniwetok and Majuro through mid-March as mop-up operations continued at those places. Assigned next to TG 58.2, including *Bunker Hill* (CV-17), *Hornet* (CV-12), *Monterey* (CVL-26), and *Cabot* (CVL-23), *Aylwin* screened those carriers as they carried out strikes intended to reduce Japanese airpower in the Central Pacific. On 30 March, the Fast Carrier Task Force commenced intensive bombing of Japanese airfields, shipping, fleet servicing facilities, and other installations in the Carolines, continuing the raids until 1 April. *Aylwin* helped to drive off snooping enemy planes during the approach of the carriers on the 29th and 30th and, at 1343 on the latter day, sighted a damaged Curtiss SB2C "Helldiver" from *Bunker Hill*'s air group ditch a short way off. The destroyer altered course and soon thereafter picked up the pilot and his radioman.

Returning to Majuro to replenish, *Aylwin* sortied once more on 13 April in the screen of Rear Admiral Alfred E. Montgomery's TG 58.2, bound for waters off New Guinea to support Army landings at Aitape, Tanahmerah Bay, and Humboldt Bay, from D-1 Day (21 April) through the 24th. The establishment of these beachheads in New Guinea demonstrated the capability of American carrier-based air power to provide ample air support for military operations far beyond the range of the nearest friendly land-based planes. Planes from the ships that *Aylwin* screened pounded Hollandia's airfield, beach and supply areas, and coastal defenses on the 21st, and maintained a heavy schedule of pre-invasion strikes that denied the enemy use of the Hollandia airfield. *Aylwin* returned to Majuro on 4 May for tender repairs alongside *Prairie* (AD-15) which ended on the 21st.

After screening *Bunker Hill* and *Cabot* during training in late May and early June, the veteran destroyer departed Majuro on 6 June bound for the Marianas in company with TF 58. On the 12th, the planes from the carriers bombed enemy air facilities and coast defenses in the Marianas and damaged two Japanese convoys. The overpowering attack smothered Japanese air opposition—the initial fighter sweep from TF 58's fighters destroying 124 planes at the cost of 11 "Hellcats." The strikes continued in ensuing days to prepare for the landings on Saipan, slated for 15 June.

On the 13th, *Aylwin* was part of the Northern Bombardment Unit (TU 58.7.2) which shelled defense positions on the northern coast of Saipan and also served in the antisubmarine screen for the battleships *Alabama* (BB-60) and *South Dakota*. When the shelling ended at 1715, she rejoined the carriers and guarded them as they refueled the next day. During that operation, the destroyer received orders to rescue a pair of *Bunker Hill* aviators and, less than an hour later, picked up Ens. G. W.

Snediker, USNR, and Aviation Radioman 3d Class R. E. Lincoln, USNR. The destroyer made another rescue on the 16th while covering the cruiser bombardment of Guam when a plane piloted by Ens. F. P. Kleffner, USNR, crashed 1800 yards astern.

On the 17th, *Aylwin* was ordered to help screen the transports, and she missed the Battle of the Philippine Sea on the 19th and 20th which almost wiped out Japanese carrier-based aviation. *Aylwin* next proceeded to Eniwetok where she arrived on 28 June for a fortnight's upkeep.

The Pacific Fleet next went after Guam, which had been under Japanese control since the second day of the war. *Aylwin* screened *Wichita* (CA-45) and *St. Louis* (CL-49) as those cruisers shelled enemy installations ashore on 18 and 19 July before taking part in a bombardment of the northern shores of Guam, concentrating her fire on Japanese defensive positions near Asan Beach.

At the outset of the mission, *Dewey* and two LCI's provided harassing fire into that area. Later, *Minneapolis* (CA-36) and *Dewey* stood in close to the beach, lying close to Adelup Point and covered the night beach obstruction demolition work of underwater demolition teams (UDT's), screened to seaward by *Aylwin*, *Dale*, and *Dickerson* (APD-21).

*Aylwin* relieved *Dewey* on station at 0130 on 21 July, closed in to 1500 yards off Asan Beach, and carried out harassing fire, maintaining a systematic 5-inch and automatic weapons fire while illuminating the area with starshell. *Dale* in turn relieved *Aylwin* on station at 0330 and continued the harassment of the enemy ashore. *Minneapolis* and the LCI's remained in the vicinity the entire night.

Relieved at 0530, *Aylwin* and her colleagues retired to the transport screen northwest of Orote Point and Agana Bay. On 25 and 26 July, the destroyer screened a cruiser bombardment of Rota Island and departed the area on the 30th, bound for Eniwetok on the first leg of a voyage home. *Aylwin* stopped at Pearl Harbor from 9 to 11 August and reached Bremerton, Wash., on the 17th for an overhaul.

Completing overhaul and post-repair trials, the ship headed down the coast in company with *Colorado* (BB-46) and *Farragut*, reached San Pedro on 10 October, and set out for Hawaii the next day. Making port at Pearl Harbor on 18 October, *Aylwin* then trained in Hawaiian waters until 11 November, when she sailed for the western Pacific in company with *Baltimore* (CA-68), *San Juan* (CL-54), and three destroyers. She reached Ulithi, in the Western Carolines, on 21 November and operated between that port and the Philippines into the first week of December 1944, screening replenishment groups supporting operations in the Philippines.

On 10 December, *Aylwin*—flagship of Commander TG 30.8 (a replenishment group), Capt. Jasper Acuff—left Ulithi as the 3d Fleet put to sea to continue its support of the efforts to wrest the Philippines from the Japanese. Three days later, *Aylwin* and her charges rendezvoused with TF 38 and, upon completion of fueling operations early the following afternoon, cleared the area.

On the morning of the 17th, TG 30.8 joined TF 38 and again commenced fueling. However, the weather soon began growing worse as a severe storm swirled into the Philippine Sea. The rising winds and mountainous seas forced the fleet to cease fueling, leaving many ships with depleted tanks, some improperly ballasted for the coming "blow."

*Aylwin*'s commanding officer, Lt. Comdr. William K. Rogers, prudently ordered all preparations made to enable his ship to be ready to meet the typhoon which was approaching the 3d Fleet. At 1700, he ordered the ship ballasted to compensate for the lack of fuel in the ship and had all ready ammunition and moveable topside equipment struck below.

At 0245 on the 18th, when *Aylwin* temporarily lost electrical power and steering control, she shifted to hand steering in an effort to rejoin the formation. Soon thereafter, she began to roll violently. With the ship "buttoned up" as much as practicable, *Aylwin* proceeded on through the nightmarish weather, the banshee-like wind screaming through the rigging. When the fleet changed course, *Aylwin* slipped into the trough of the waves, and no combination of engines and rudder could maintain steering control as she wallowed at the mercy of the tempest.

After *Aylwin* rolled 70 degrees to port for the first time, Lt. Comdr. Rogers ordered her engines stopped. The ship hung there for an eternal 15 seconds before slowly righting herself. An attempt to get underway revealed that any forward movement of the ship increased the roll. After a second 70-degree, roll

occurred, the ship only righted herself to 60 degrees. For the next 20 minutes, the typhoon lashed at *Aylwin* with her full fury, often pushing the ship over to rolls that varied between 30 and 70 degrees.

As the sea continued its destructive work, tearing loose the whaleboat and its davits, *Aylwin* continued to struggle for survival. At 1245, Machinists Mate 1st Class Sarenski was swept overboard; followed 10 minutes later by the chief engineer, Lt. E. R. Rendahl, USNR. Neither was rescued.

At 1330, the engine-room ventilators failed. Now denied fresh air, the engine room became an oven as its temperature shot up to 180 degrees, forcing its abandonment. For the next six hours, *Aylwin* doggedly hung on, fighting the raging sea for her life. As if the fury of the storm without were not enough, a leak in the engine room at 1930 drew all pumps into action. Eventually the inrush of water was brought under control just as it crept up above the floorplates. The sloshing of this water further reduced the ship's already "tender" stability.

Each man in *Aylwin* fought the fear that the ship would turn turtle—each roll could be deeper; each might be the last. Every sailor hoped and prayed to be delivered from the typhoon; and, providentially, *Aylwin* did survive Neptune's onslaught.

However, other ships had not fared so well. The storm claimed *Hull*, *Monaghan*, and *Spence* (DD-512), each with heavy loss of life. Seventeen other ships suffered varying degrees of damage in the storm.

Her flooding under control, *Aylwin* arrived at Ulithi three days before Christmas. There, she received repairs alongside *Markab* (AD-21) that lasted into January 1945. While at Ulithi, *Aylwin* conducted a brief patrol of the harbor after an explosion in *Mazama* (AE-12)—believed to have been caused by a submarine torpedo—but found no evidence of submarine activity.

The destroyer continued her operations as screen for replenishment groups into February of 1945. As part of the screen of TG 50.8, she—together with *Crowley* (DE-303), *Weaver* (DE-741), *Suamico* (AO-49), *Shasta* (AE-6), and *Wrangell* (AE-12) reached Iwo Jima on 21 February. She then began protecting the transports. On 23 February, *Aylwin* was assigned to TF 54, the fire support group, and relieved *Tuscaloosa* (CA-37) in fire support sector 1.

By that time, marines had occupied the southern section of Iwo Jima and were advancing to the north against stiff enemy opposition. On 23 and 24 February, *Aylwin* fired close support, expending 330 rounds of 5-inch, neutralizing enemy-held positions on call, before she left Iwo Jima on the 25th for a fueling rendezvous en route back to Ulithi where she arrived on the 28th.

During the first phase of the invasion of Okinawa, *Aylwin* operated between Kerama Retto and Ulithi. In early April, she endured her second typhoon on 5 June 1945. Although much less destructive than the first, this storm caused Lt. Comdr. Rogers to report: "with the present sea-keeping and stability characteristics, the *Farragut*-class destroyers are unable to adequately cope with severe typhoon conditions."

*Aylwin* rendezvoused with the storm-damaged *Pittsburgh* (CA-72) which had lost her bow in this tempest, joining that cruiser late in the afternoon. She subsequently searched unsuccessfully for the damaged warship's severed bow before putting into Apra Harbor, Guam, on 10 June for repairs lasting until 6 July.

On that day she got underway to return to the Carolines and reached Ulithi on the next. She sortied on the 10th as an escort for Convoy UOK-39 and safely saw her 41 charges to Okinawa.

After returning to Ulithi with another convoy, *Aylwin* began steaming off the anchorage on picket station B-6 at 1640 on 3 August. The next morning at 0306, while on station, she received orders to proceed to latitude 11°45' north, longitude 133°35' east, to search for survivors of the torpedoed *Indianapolis*. *Aylwin* accordingly broke off her patrol, raced to the scene of the disaster, and searched her assigned area. However, by that time, the sea had claimed many of the survivors. The destroyer located and examined three bodies, removing all identification materials and fingerprinting them before burying them at sea. She also found and brought on board two aircraft-type rubber rafts and an empty floater net. At 0525 on 6 August, she headed back to Ulithi.

Underway again on 13 August, *Aylwin* escorted a convoy of troopships to the Marianas, reaching Apra Harbor on 14 August. When Japan capitulated the following day, *Aylwin* was at Apra Harbor.

Three days later, the destroyers got underway for the Hawaiian Islands, in company with *MacDonough* and *Rudyard Bay* (CVE-81), and reached Pearl Harbor soon thereafter. On 27 August, *Aylwin* embarked four officers and 50 enlisted men at that port for passage to the west coast and, the following day, sailed for the California coast. The veteran destroyer disembarked her passengers at San Diego and, after tarrying there from 3 to 11 September, got underway for Panama and the east coast of the United States.

Transiting the canal for the last time on 20 September, *Aylwin* reached New York City on 25 September. Decommissioned at the New York Navy Yard on 16 October 1945, *Aylwin* was struck from the Navy list on 1 November 1945. Stripped for disposal, her hull was sold and delivered to George N. Nutman, Inc., of Brooklyn, N.Y., on 20 December 1946 and cut up for scrap by 2 September 1948.

*Aylwin* (DD-355) received 13 battle stars for her World War II service.

#### IV

(DE-1081: dp. 3,963; l. 438'; b. 47'; dr. 25'; s. 27 k.; cpl. 245; a. 1 5", 4 12.75" tt., ASROC, Sea Sparrow; cl. *Knox*)

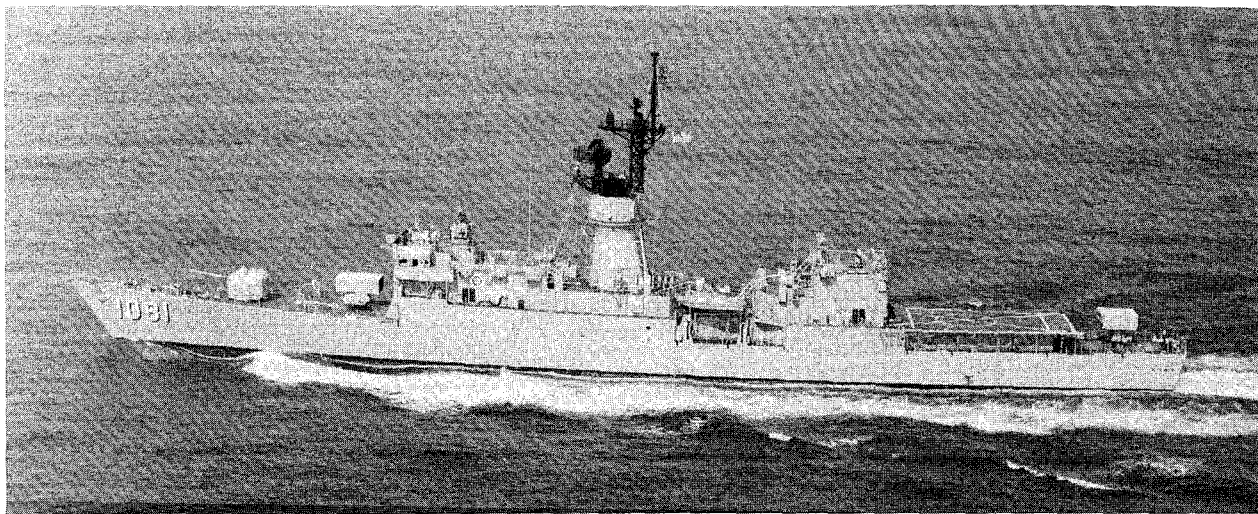
The fourth *Aylwin* (DE-1081) was laid down on 13 November 1969 at Westwego, La., by the Avondale Shipyard, Inc.; launched on 29 August 1970; sponsored by Mrs. Charles K. Duncan; and commissioned on 18 September 1971 at the Boston Naval Shipyard, Comdr. Dan E. Fenn in command.

Early in December, the destroyer escort sailed for her home port, Norfolk, Va., and arrived there on 10 December. After spending the holidays in port, *Aylwin* headed for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for shakedown training. While en route, *Aylwin* stopped at Andros Island, Bahamas, for weapons testing. Arriving at Guantanamo Bay on 24 January 1972, the ship began four weeks of intensive training. She visited Santo Domingo for a liberty call before returning to Norfolk for post-shakedown availability. Late in October, the vessel participated in LAN-TREDEX 2-72 and then made final preparations for her first overseas deployment. On 1 December, *Aylwin* departed Norfolk to join the 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean. Her first stop was at El Ferrol, Spain. Departing that port on 13 December, she transited the Strait of Gibraltar and proceeded to Athens, Greece, where she spent the holiday season.

On 6 January 1973, *Aylwin* got underway for antisubmarine warfare (ASW) operations to be held in the eastern Mediterranean in conjunction with Task Force (TF) 60. The ship pulled in to Golfe Juan, France, on 17 January, then continued on to Gibraltar. Next came ASW operations in the eastern Mediterranean followed by a visit to Naples, Italy, for a two-week tender availability. The destroyer escort then visited Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia. On 17 February, she participated in NATO Exercise "National Week," held in conjunction with British, Italian, and Turkish warships. She arrived at Alanya, Turkey, on 28 February and then stopped at Athens; La Maddalena, Italy; Alicante, Barcelona, and Valencia, Spain; Tunis, Tunisia; Villefranche, Cannes, and Toulon, France; and Gibraltar. On 20 June, *Aylwin* got underway once more for the United States. She paused at the Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown, Va., on 27 June, to unload her weapons and returned to Norfolk the next day ending an absence of seven months. The ship was drydocked from 19 July to 20 August. She received the light air multi-purpose system (LAMPS) modification during a yard period lasting through 26 October. A tender availability came in November, and December found the ship in a standdown period.

The destroyer escort sailed on 19 February 1974 for refresher training at Guantanamo Bay. While there, she took part in ASW exercises in addition to testing her new LAMPS equipment. She returned to Norfolk on 27 April to make final preparations for her second overseas deployment. On 17 June, *Aylwin* set sail for the Mideast and the Indian Ocean. Her first stop was Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, where she held gunnery exercises. She then proceeded to Trinidad for a refueling stop. *Aylwin* next put in to Recife, Brazil, for a brief liberty period.

She got underway again on the 28th to cross the Atlantic and arrived at Freetown, Sierra Leone, on 2 July. *Aylwin's* next stop was Luanda, Angola. Her visit there was curtailed by an outbreak of violence associated with that country's bid for independence from Portugal. The vessel weighed anchor on 13 July, sailed around the Cape of Good Hope, and entered the Indian



*Aylwin* (FF-1081), underway circa 1978. (USN 1173470)

Ocean. *Aylwin* arrived in Port Louis, Mauritius, on 26 July, and continued on to Reunion Island on 31 July. Her next stop was Moroni, Great Comoro Island. On 6 August, she arrived at Mombasa, Kenya. The destroyer escort got underway again on the 17th and spent the next two months patrolling the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf. She made brief stops at Djibouti, Afars and Issas; Masirah, Oman; Bahrain; Bandar Abbas, Iran; and Massawa, Ethiopia.

After final calls at Mombasa and Port Louis, *Aylwin* sailed on 8 November to return to the United States. She retraced her earlier course and made stops at Recife, Brazil, and Roosevelt Roads before reaching Norfolk on 13 December.

The ship returned to sea in mid-February 1975 with a series of exercises in the Virginia capes area. On 17 March, she sailed from Norfolk, bound for the Narragansett Bay operating area to conduct a LAMPS test. During the cruise, she visited New York City and Albany, N. Y., before returning to Norfolk on 28 March. The next two months were occupied by a series of inspections. On 12 June, *Aylwin* sailed for Newport, R. I., to conduct a mid-shipman training cruise. While on this assignment, *Aylwin* was officially reclassified a frigate and redesignated FF-1081 on 1 July. She returned to Norfolk on 3 July. The ship sailed on 7 August for Guantanamo Bay and the fleet exercise CARIBEX. The next day, she experienced mechanical difficulties and proceeded to the Charleston Naval Shipyard for repairs. After two more attempts to sail to the Caribbean, *Aylwin* turned back to Norfolk on 27 August. After a month of repairs and preparations, the frigate sailed on 3 October for the Mediterranean. She reached Rota, Spain, on 13 October and was scheduled to take part in exercises. However, a boiler problem necessitated a run to Naples, Italy, for a two-week availability alongside *Piedmont* (AD-17). With the repairs completed, *Aylwin* set sail for Toulon, France, on 2 November to join NATO forces in Exercise "Isle d'Or." Following this operation, *Aylwin* arrived in Palermo, Sicily, on 20 November. Additional visits were made at Athens, Greece; Souda Bay, Crete; and Kusadasi, Turkey. *Aylwin* returned to Naples on 22 December 1975 for the Christmas holidays.

On 7 January 1976, *Aylwin* got underway with Task Group (TG) 60.1 for ASW exercises. She then sailed to the ports of Piraeus, Greece; Souda Bay; Bodrum, Turkey; Catania, Sicily; Valencia, Spain; Palma, Majorca; and Gaeta and Genoa, Italy. *Aylwin* briefly stopped once again at Rota on 17 April, then left the Mediterranean, bound for Norfolk where she spent May and early June in leave and upkeep. A week of ASW exercises came in mid-June. On 26 July, *Aylwin* proceeded to Philadelphia, Pa., where she entered drydock at the naval shipyard on 8 August for overhaul.

The frigate departed Philadelphia on 6 June 1977 and steamed to her new home port, Charleston, S.C. There, she became a unit of Destroyer Squadron 20. During the next six weeks, *Aylwin* conducted local operations; and, on 18 July, she headed for the Caribbean and refresher training. She was back in Charles-

ton on 20 September and spent the rest of the year in training exercises and inspections.

*Aylwin* put to sea on 3 January 1978 to provide *Sand Lance* (SSN-660) and *Sturgeon* (SSN-637) services as a target as those submarines sharpened their hunting skills. The next day, she was directed to proceed to the Key West, Fla., area to conduct surveillance operations and relieve *Robert A. Owens* (DD-827). She finished these duties on 10 January and arrived back at Charleston on the 11th. The next three months were devoted to local operations and preparations for overseas movement. *Aylwin* rendezvoused with other units of Cruiser-Destroyer Group 12 off Bermuda on 7 April and sailed across the Atlantic to Malaga, Spain. A series of ASW exercises followed; and, on 29 April, the frigate moored alongside *Howard W. Gilmore* (AS-16) at La Maddalena, Sardinia, for an availability. On 14 May, *Aylwin* put to sea, bound for Souda Bay. There, she joined NATO forces for Exercise "Dawn Patrol." Following that operation, the ship anchored at Skiathos, Greece, on 1 June. Her other ports of call during the cruise were Barcelona, Spain; Golfo di Palmas, Sardinia; and St. Tropez and Toulon, France. The last exercise of the deployment was Exercise "Display Determination," which lasted from 26 September to 8 October. Following a final stop at Malaga, *Aylwin* set sail on 14 October for Charleston. She arrived at her home port 11 days later and spent the remainder of 1978 there undergoing upkeep.

The ship devoted January and February 1979 to training and inspection and, on 26 February, began a restricted availability. She got underway again on 6 April for a dependents' cruise and, 10 days later, proceeded to Puerto Rico for refresher training. From 1 to 8 May, *Aylwin* took part in SUBASWEX 3-79. After completing this exercise, she sailed to New York City for the celebration of Armed Forces Week. The frigate returned to Charleston late in May and commenced a series of tests and inspections prior to beginning her next overseas deployment.

On 1 August, *Aylwin* got underway for another Mideast cruise. She made refueling stops at Bermuda and Ponta del Gada before reaching Rota on 11 August. From Rota, she headed to Malaga and then continued eastward. She passed through the Suez Canal on 19 August and arrived in Jidda, Saudi Arabia, on the 22d. She moved south on 1 September to the Gulf of Aden, thence steamed around the Arabian peninsula and through the Strait of Hormuz to reach Bahrain. The frigate got underway on the 4th to operate in the Persian Gulf and pulled into Dammam, Saudi Arabia, on 16 September for two days of liberty. *Aylwin* took part in a joint exercise with Saudi forces, then stopped at Bahrain for refueling. She proceeded to the Seychelles Islands on 8 October, but her stay was shortened by civil unrest. On 13 October, *Aylwin* sailed for Djibouti. From there, she headed into the Gulf of Aden to conduct an exercise with warships of the French Navy on 22 October.

*Aylwin* steamed eastward and then north around the Arabian peninsula to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, where she par-



ticipated in an exercise with naval forces from Oman. The frigate then sailed to Bahrain for a two-week upkeep period. That respite ended abruptly on 4 November when she got underway only two hours after learning that militant Iranian students had stormed into the United States embassy in Tehran and made captives of American diplomatic and military personnel. The frigate headed back into the Persian Gulf for surveillance and patrol duties that lasted until 9 December. On that day, *Aylwin* began the long voyage home. She paused at Djibouti to refuel, then sailed north, transited the Suez Canal, and continued across the Mediterranean to Rota, Spain, where she arrived on 23 December. After celebrating Christmas in that Spanish port, *Aylwin* sailed for Charleston on 28 December 1979. Following a stormy Atlantic crossing, she stood into Charleston, S.C., on 7 January 1980.

The frigate completed post-deployment standdown on 6 February and spent the next two weeks making minor repairs. On the 19th, *Aylwin* returned to sea to conduct drills with Atlantic Fleet submarines. She carried out such routine training missions along the eastern seaboard until the end of April. On the 28th, the warship departed Charleston and set course for Brooklyn, N.Y., where she entered the yard at the Coastal Drydock & Repair Corp. for a major overhaul. The repairs—which included major work to her main propulsion plant, a period in drydock, and many lesser modifications—lasted a year almost exactly. She conducted sea trials on 29 and 30 April 1981 and returned to Charleston on 3 May 1981.

Soon thereafter, *Aylwin* embarked upon a lengthy period of operations out of Charleston. Those operations consisted of a series of exercises preparatory to certification in the operation of her propulsion system and of her varied ordnance systems. Refresher training in the West Indies followed qualification preparations early in September. The frigate concluded refresher training late in October and reentered her home port on the 25th. Duty out of Charleston continued through the end of 1981 into February of 1982. Late in February, *Aylwin* suffered damage to her high pressure turbine that interrupted her training schedule until mid-April. The warship resumed exercises on 12 April with READEX 5-82 in preparation for a deployment to the Mediterranean planned for June.

On 8 June 1982, the frigate steamed out of Charleston on her way across the Atlantic. In spite of damage she suffered in a collision with *Seattle* (AOE-3) during an underway refueling operation, *Aylwin* continued on to Rota, Spain, and arrived there on the 19th. She entered the Mediterranean Sea on the 20th and joined a carrier task group built around *Forrestal* (CV-59). The warship's arrival in the Mediterranean came in the immediate aftermath of the 6 June Israeli drive into Lebanon against the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) based there. Serious though conditions in Lebanon were, *Aylwin* carried out normal 6th Fleet operations, including a freedom of navigation mission across Libyan president Muammar Qaddafi's "Line of Death" into the Gulf of Sidra, until the latter part of August. By then, American diplomat Philip Habib had defused the situation in Lebanon by extracting an agreement from the contending parties which called for the departure of the PLO from Lebanese soil. *Aylwin* served as escort for two of the merchant ships providing transportation. On 21 and 22 August, she convoyed the Greek ship *SS Sol Georgis* from Beirut to Cyprus with the first contingent of PLO evacuees. Returning to Beirut on the 23d, the frigate shepherded *SS Alkyon* thence through the Suez Canal to Aden where the ships arrived on 29 August. Reversing course that same day, *Aylwin* retransited the canal and headed for a liberty call at Palma de Mallorca, Spain.

The warship put to sea again on 14 September to conduct antisubmarine warfare (ASW) exercises in the western Mediterranean. That same day, the Lebanese president-elect Bashir Gemayel lost his life to assassins. That event and the massacres it sparked prompted France, Italy, and the United States to reconstitute the multinational force that had overseen the PLO evacuation. As a consequence, *Aylwin* broke off from Operation "Display Determination" and hurried east in company with *Independence* (CV-62) to support the reentry of the multinational force into Lebanon. Except for an 11-day visit to Gaeta, Italy, in mid-October, for repairs and liberty, the frigate patrolled the waters off Lebanon until the middle of November.

Following a liberty call at Pireaus, Greece, between the 18th and the 21st, *Aylwin* headed for the strategic Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. Passing through the Straits, she

conducted training evolutions with *William V. Pratt* (DDG-44) in the Black Sea before calling at Istanbul, Turkey, on 26 November. The warship passed through the Straits again on the 28th and conducted operations south of Crete until 7 December when *Connole* (FF-1056) relieved her. *Aylwin* then laid in a course for Rota, Spain, on the first leg of the voyage back to the United States. The stop at Rota took up two days, and, on 12 December, she embarked upon the Atlantic passage in company with 15 other Navy ships. *Aylwin* reached Charleston on 22 December.

For most of the first five months of 1983, the frigate carried out no operational activity. Post-deployment standdown lasted well into January while an extended maintenance period occupied February and the better part of March. On 23 and 24 March, she made an overnight passage from Charleston to Norfolk where she entered the drydock on the 24th. Work on her hull and sonar dome took up the next five weeks after which *Aylwin* returned to Charleston to prepare for a deployment to northern European waters.

On 29 May, she stood out of Charleston on her way to participate in Operation "United Effort/Ocean Safari '83" which included operations in the Baltic Sea. During that tour of duty the warship also made port calls at Portsmouth, England, on two occasions, and at Malmo, Sweden, and Aalborg, Denmark, once each. *Aylwin* returned to Charleston on 25 July and stayed there until the beginning of September. The frigate put to sea again on 2 September and headed south for a four-week assignment in the Caribbean Sea that included calls at a number of tropical ports. Back in Charleston on 4 October, she spent the remainder of 1983 engaged in operations along the east coast.

During the first three months of 1984, *Aylwin* left Charleston only once, as part of a task group built around *Saratoga* (CV-60) to conduct a readiness exercise during the first three weeks of February. Otherwise, she carried out maintenance and repair work that included the removal of her basic point defense surface missile system and its replacement with the phalanx close-in weapons system for antiaircraft defense. Between her return to Charleston from the readiness exercise late in February to the beginning of April, the warship concentrated on preparations for her impending assignment to the 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean Sea. She stood out of Charleston on 2 April in company with *Julius A. Furer* (FFG-6), *Sellers* (DDG-11), and *Semmes* (DDG-18). *Aylwin* and her three traveling companions made the Atlantic passage in 10 days and joined the 6th Fleet on 13 April. In the course of her six-month tour of duty in the Mediterranean, the frigate participated in two NATO exercises, a number of exercises with units of the 6th Fleet, and the ubiquitous independent ASW evolution. She punctuated her training duties with port visits throughout the "middle sea." Relieved by *Elmer Montgomery* (FF-1082) at Tangier, Morocco, *Aylwin* got underway to return home on 24 October.

She arrived back in Charleston on 2 November and, after a somewhat abbreviated leave and upkeep period, entered the Charleston Naval Shipyard on the 26th for a three-month availability that stretched into four. On 8 April 1985, *Aylwin* returned to sea to carry out refresher training in the vicinity of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The frigate completed that mission in mid-May and spent a week in Charleston before heading back to the West Indies on 24 May on a midshipman training cruise. She concluded her second cruise to the tropics at Charleston on 12 June and launched into a routine of inspections, upkeep, and minor repairs. During the first part of August, *Aylwin* voyaged to Vieques Island, near Puerto Rico, for shore bombardment drills.

Back in Charleston on 12 August, she began preparations to visit northern European waters and the Baltic Sea. She embarked upon that two-month assignment on 26 August participating in Exercise "Ocean Safari '85" during the Atlantic crossing. After a call at Dublin, Ireland, between 22 and 27 September, the frigate sailed to the Baltic Sea. She stopped at Copenhagen, Denmark, and at Kiel, Germany, before carrying out training operations in the Baltic Sea. *Aylwin* made a final European port visit at Aalborg, Denmark, from 21 to 27 October and then got underway to return to the United States. She arrived back at Charleston on 6 November. *Aylwin* stayed at Charleston through the end of 1985 and for the first month of 1986. She went back to sea on 3 February 1986 to participate in FLEETEX 2-86 as part of the ASW screen for *America* (CV-66).

The frigate returned to Charleston on 25 February and began two weeks of feverish activity preparing for an early deployment

to the Mediterranean Sea. On 10 March, she stood out of Charleston in company with *America* once again and shaped a course for the Strait of Gibraltar. *Aylwin* and her colleagues passed into the Mediterranean on the 19th and became part of the 6th Fleet. Five days later, the warship joined in another freedom of navigation operation near Muammar Qaddafi's so-called "Line of Death." That evolution ended on the 28th, and the frigate followed it up with port visits to the Sicilian ports Taormina and Catania. She then conducted ASW operations south of Malta until 13 April when she rejoined *America's* screen. *Aylwin* provided anti-aircraft and antisubmarine protection for *America* while the carrier's air group combined with Air Force bombers to strike targets in Libya in retaliation for apparent Libyan involvement in terrorist attacks carried out against United States' citizens.

The latest Libyan interlude ended on 27 April and, after another port call at Taormina, the frigate resumed more conventional 6th Fleet activities. In the ensuing weeks, she took part in two major exercises, and her crew enjoyed liberty in a number of ports. *Aylwin* completed turnover formalities at Tangier, Morocco, once again and got underway for the United States on 31 August. The warship reentered Charleston on 10 September. Except for two brief periods underway in December, she spent the rest of 1986 in port. As of the beginning of 1987, *Aylwin* was at Charleston.

### *Azalea*

Any of a large group of shrubs cultivated for their bountiful blossoms of widely varied colors.

### I

(ScTug: t. 176; l. 110'; b. 21'6"; dph. 8'3"; dr. 10'; s. 10 k.; cpl. 42; a. 1 30-pdr. P.r., 1 20-pdr. D.r.)

The first *Azalea*—a wooden-hulled, screw tug built at Boston by McKay and Aldus—was purchased by the Navy upon her completion on 31 March 1864. After her fitting out at the Boston Navy Yard, the tug was placed in commission on 7 June 1864, Acting Master Frederick W. Strong in command.

Assigned to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, the new tug arrived off the bar outside Charleston, S.C., on 17 June 1864 and immediately took station in the outer cordon of Union warships striving to seal off that major port which, as the birthplace of secession, held great symbolic significance for the Confederacy in addition to its substantial strategic value. The highlight of this duty—which she performed until March 1865—came half an hour before midnight on 8 July 1864 when her boats joined those of the tug *Sweet Brier* in boarding and taking possession of the blockade-running "... schooner *Pocahontas*, of and from Charleston, S.C., bound to Nassau, New Providence ..." with a cargo of cotton and tobacco.

From time to time during her ensuing months off Charleston, *Azalea* had brushes with blockade runners which were attempting to enter or leave port, but she did not score again before she retired to Port Royal, S.C., just before the arrival of spring. When this work had been completed, late in March 1865, she headed for waters near Savannah, Ga., and was on duty in Ossabaw Sound by 1 April. By this time, the Confederacy was collapsing. Lee's army evacuated Richmond and Confederate President Jefferson Davis and his cabinet retired into the deep South in the hope of continuing the struggle. However, Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia on the 9th and General Joseph E. Johnston realized that his army, the only significant body of Confederate troops left in the field, could not prevail. On the 25th, Gen. William T. Sherman informed Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren that he expected Johnston to surrender the next day and asked the commander of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron to "... watch the east coast and send word round to the west coast ..." lest Davis and his cabinet escape to Cuba.

*Azalea* was one of the nine steamers that Dahlgren promptly sent to sea to intercept the former Southern chief of state. However, Union cavalymen captured Davis at Irwinville, Ga., on 10 May; and *Azalea* returned to Port Royal 15 May.

Nevertheless, the war was not yet quite over for the tug. On 23 May, she seized *Sarah M. Newall* while that British hermaphrodite brig was attempting to run through the blockade into Savannah.

*Azalea* continued blockade duty into June and, by mid-month, was back at Port Royal receiving repairs. She got underway north on 27 June and was decommissioned on 13 July 1865. Sold at auction at Philadelphia to Samuel C. Cook on 10 August 1865, the tug was redocumented as *Tecumseh* on 6 October 1865. Operating, at least originally, out of Boston, she remained in documentation until 1890.

### II

(LHT: t. 500; l. 145'; b. 25'; cpl. 22)

The lighthouse tender *Azalea* was built at New York City in 1891 for the United States Lighthouse Service. Transferred to the Navy on 16 April 1917, she was commissioned on 9 May and assigned to the 1st Naval District for which she salvaged navigational aids, adjusted buoys, and tended nets through the Armistice and into 1919. Following the return of peace the tender returned to the Lighthouse Service in accordance with an Executive Order dated 1 July 1919.

### III

(MB: t. 22; l. 61'6"; dr. 4'3"; s. 16.0 k.; cpl. 7; a. 1 mg.)

*Azalea*—a wooden-hulled motor launch built in 1915 at Wilmington, Calif., by the Joe Fellows Yacht and Launch Co., and owned in 1917 by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Immigration, was turned over to the Navy and commissioned on 14 May 1917.

Her extant logs, which did not commence until 25 November 1917, and show a Warrant Machinist George A. Perkins, USNRF, in command, reveal a very busy regimen for the former Immigration Service launch, as she operated out of the section headquarters at San Pedro, Calif., patrolling Los Angeles harbor. Her routine—involving the checking of ships both arriving at, or clearing, the busy west coast port—called upon her to investigate a substantial number of ships and craft of all sizes, ranging from tuna boats to tankers. For example, during the week ending 22 December 1917, she conducted 1,892 inspections.

Her wartime work done, *Azalea* reported for duty to the Submarine Base at San Pedro on 27 November 1918 and, on 7 December, turned in her "main battery," a single machine gun, to the training station nearby. She remained inactive until turned back to the Bureau of Immigration at noon on 26 February 1919. Her name was simultaneously struck from the Navy list.

Resuming her work with the Immigration Service, *Azalea* plied the waters of San Pedro harbor until 1923, after which time her name disappeared from listings of small craft of the Department of Labor.

### *Azimech*

A star in the constellation Spica.

(AK-124: dp. 14,550; l. 441'6"; b. 56'11"; dr. 28'4"; s. 12.5 k.; cpl. 214; a. 1 5", 1 3", 8 20mm.; cl. *Crater*; T. EC2-S-C1)

*Mary Patten* was laid down on 21 July 1943 under a Maritime Commission contract (MCE hull 1725) by the Permanente Metals Corp., Richmond, Calif.; launched on 11 August 1943; sponsored by Mrs. Otis A. Kent; acquired by the Navy on 7 October 1943; renamed *Azimech* and designated AK-124 on 11 October 1943; converted for naval service at Oakland, Calif., by the Moore Drydock Co.; and commissioned on 29 October 1943, Lt. Comdr. E. P. Gaither in command.

After a brief shakedown, the cargo ship got underway on 11 November for Hawaii. At Pearl Harbor, she was assigned for duty to Service Squadron 8, Pacific Fleet. The ship discharged her cargo and then entered the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard for an overhaul of her main engines and boilers. *Azimech* was on keelblocks for 16 days, then began loading cargo. She set sail on 28 December for the Gilbert Islands.

*Azimech* reached Tarawa on 8 January 1944 and began unloading her cargo. The process was hampered by frequent enemy air attacks and reefs in the lagoon which permitted the ship to unload only at high tide. *Azimech* made additional stops at Makin